THE

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THE HINDU MESSAGE stands for

(1) Self-Government for India within the British Commonwealth,

(2) Co-operation with the different communities of India without prejudice to Hindu Dharma,

(3) Education of the Hindus as an integral part of the Indian Nation,

(4) Advancement of Material prosperity on a spiritual basis and

(5) Dissemination of pure Hindu Culture.

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A Vision of India.

OTHER ANCIENT TOWNS

BY K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, B.A. B.L.,

What towns of ancient might and loveliness
Unchanged in soul though changed in outer form
Have raised their heads 'spite Time's destroying storm
And kept undimmed their splendour's shining dress!
How many linked to Rama's noble story bless
Our eyes—Ayodhia, Lucknow safe from harm,
And Janakpur, Kusawar, Lahore—warm
With rich and recollected blessedness!
And Patna full of Chandragupta's might
And great Asoka's love's victorious reign;
Ujjain yet full of Udayana's lays;
And Srinagar which on the ravished sight
Like heaven shines; Muttra whose name soothes pain;
And Agra, home of true love's sculptured praise.

Great Thoughts.

Does friendship really go on to be more a pain than a pleasure? I doubt it; for even in its deepest sorrows there is a joy which makes ordinary pleasure a very poor, meaningless affair; no, no, we need never be scared from the very depths of friendship by its possible consequences. The very fact of loving another more than yourself is in itself such a blessing that it seems scarcely to require any other, and puts you in a comfortable position of independence.

A friend whom you have been gaining during your whole life, you ought not to be displeased with in a moment. A stone is many years becoming a ruby; take care that you do not destroy it in an instant against another stone.

I think that the two things above all others that have made men in all ages believe in immortality—apart, so far as we know, from any revelation save that which is written on the human heart—have been the broken loves and broken friendships of the world.

Human spirits are only to be drawn together and held together by the living bond of having found something in which they really do agree.

Such a friendship, that through it we love places and seasons; for as bright bodies emit rays at a distance, and flowers drop their sweet leaves on the ground around them, so friends impart favour even to the places where they dwell. With friends even poverty is pleasant. Words cannot express the joy which a friend imparts; they only can know who have experienced. A friend is dearer than the light of heaven, for it would be better for us that the sun were extinguished than that we should be without friends.

The friendship I have conceived will not be impaired by absence; but it may be no unpleasing circumstance to brighten the chain by a renewal of the covenant.

If a man does not make new friendships as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man should keep his friendship in constant repair.

A Garland of Quiet Thoughts.

Events of the Week.

We regret very much to record the death at Calcutta of that veteran Journalist Babu Moti Lal Ghose, the Editor of 'Amrita Bazar Patrika.' The sad news, though expected, has caused us poignant grief, for his loss is an irreperable one. We hope to refer to his life work next week.

* * *

As a result of the abnormal conditions brought about by the Great European War, the Government permitted for a period of three years from the 1st July 1919 the cultivation of the waste lands classified as Railway peramboke in the Madras Presidency with a view to stimulate the production of food stuffs. The period of three years expired on 1st July 1922.

The Government have now extended the concession of cultivating the Railway waste lands for another two years from 1st July 1922 only in respect of such lands as have *already* been brought under cultivation.

* * *

A series of extraordinary resolutions has been sent for discussion at the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress by Mr. Mushir Hussain Kidwai of Gadia, a non-co-operating Barrister and prominent Khilafatist. Mr. Kidwai's resolutions suggest the abolition of Congress Working Committee as it is based on the pernicious system of British Cabinet which has usurped the powers of the Parliament. The grant under certain conditions of a lakh from the Tilak Swaraj Fund to the All-India Trade Union Congress, Bombay, to organise labour urges complete boycott of all British goods, neither on grounds of economy nor racial prejudice but to compel the British Cabinet through voters to concede to the Indian demands regarding the Khilafat and Swaraj, and encouragement of Khaddar. One resolution asks for enrolment of practising lawyers and members of the Councils as members of the Congress and their appointment as office-bearers in Congress Committees, provided they accept the political object of the Congress. Mr. Kidwai also suggests that no new national schools be established but scholarships should be awarded to Indian students for technical education in foreign countries except England and asks for appointment of Indian Ambassadors on behalf of the Indian people in the capitals of Eastern and Western countries.

* * *

The "Daily Hearld" writes:—Last week Mr. Lloyd George made a speech about peace. This week he has made a speech about India. Last week the velvet glove: this week, the iron hand. Last week, the pious platitude: this week, the impious boast. Last week lip-service to a vague ideal that costs nothing, because there is no intention of attempting to put it into practice: this week, the brutal cynicism of practical politics. It is the swing of the pendulum, the oscillation of state-craft. It is a summary of Mr. Lloyd George.

Indignation and resentment smoulder. How long does Mr. Lloyd George anticipate that the forcible rule of minority will remain? For ever! He has said so. The British Civil Servants, he maintains, are "the steel framework of the whole structure." "Take that steel frame out," he argues, "and the fabric will collapse."

"For ever," says Mr. Lloyd George. He is mistaken.

No rule founded on force can last. If we want to keep India within the British Commonwealth, we must make a commonwealth, for it to be kept within. Keep it within the "Empire" we cannot, for the very idea of Empire is hostile to humanity, and the march of human progress will sweep it away.

There is no more chance for the survival of the British "Empire" than there has been for any other empire. The alternatives are that it should go down in disruption or that it should be replaced by a genuine Commonwealth of nations. We believe that India, given the free choice, would elect to remain in such a Commonwealth. But the freedom of choice is essential.

The test of British rule in India is—does it content the Indians? If it does, why are the prisons full, why is coercive legislation rampant? If it does not, how can any one hope to perpetuate it, and why should any one want to?

The Montagu reforms were never accepted by Indian opinion as adequate. Their sole possible justification was they were to develop into something more. Any little good they might have done was more than cancelled by the still unexpiated massacre of Amritsar. But their defenders clung to the plea that they were a step in the right direction—a beginning only, but, at any rate, a beginning, of something that was to develop into self-government.

To that plea Mr. Lloyd George has now definitely, formally, officially, given the lie. He has banished for all time the idea of Indian self-government. He has betrayed the hopes of our fellows. He has revealed his unswerving devotion to the old Tory—and 'Liberal'—creed of reliance upon force and domination.

And last week he was preaching peace.

* * *

Mr. B. P. Wadia, who for eighteen years has been a member of the General Council of the Theosophical Society and having lived day by day at Adyar for ten years and having worked there in various capacities, has an intimate knowledge of Adyar life and activities; and who since 1919, has worked and observed the working of various sections of the Theosophical Society and thus possesses a fair knowledge of the position in these various sections and the influences which shape the work of the organisation in these various lands has written to the President and Members of the General Council of the Theosophical Society, resigning his connection with it.

In his letter of resignation he says:

"It is but meet that I should state my reasons for this step which I am taking. As I deal at length with the matter in the accompanying document, I will be content here with giving in brief my reasons and draw your attention to my letter to all Fellow-Theosophists.

"I have come to the conclusion that the T. S. has strayed away from the "Original programme" inspired by the "Original Impulses" whereby the Master brought it into existence through the help of Their Messenger, H. P. Blavatsky. It is no more a Society of seekers of the Wisdom, but an organization where many believe in the few, and blind following has come to prevail: where shams pass for realities, and the credulity of superstition gains encouragement; and where the noble ideals of Theosophical Ethics are exploited and dragged in the mire of psychism and immorality. Theosophy as a system of thought put forward by the Master through H. P. B. has ceased to be a serious subject of persistent study, and that which has taken its place has little resemblance to the original virile, healthy, and profound teachings. The T. S. as it exists today is disloyal to Theosophy and its Holy Cause, and I regard that those who remain loyal to Theosophy cannot be loyal to the T. S.

"I have earnestly and honestly endeavoured to bring the above fact to the notice of the members by the only straightforward course of preaching the Truth as H. P. B. taught it. Time, energy and money spent in the T. S. have brought the further knowledge that the existing conditions in the T. S. are so deep-rooted and so widespread that the disease is incurable. The T. S., as feared by H. P. B., has drifted on a sandbank and is spiritually speaking, a dead body."

We are reminded of the old saying "Truth will be out anyhow."

* * *

A curious judgment was delivered last month by the Chicago Court, in a case in which a wife sued for divorce. Mrs. Haas complained that her husband preferred other women's company. The husband pleaded that he was the victim of gossip in his home where his mother-in-law was a frequent guest. The Judge, after hearing a great deal of conflicting evidence, refused to grant the divorce, but issued a couple of injunctions. The first injunction restrains Mr. Haas from "visiting, seeing, talking or riding with any woman except his wife." The second was to his mother-in-law ordering her to refrain from "visiting, talking with or in any way interfering with the domestic happiness and connubial felicity of Haas and his wife." One is put in mind of Solomon's decree over the disputed child, but what is more remarkable than the judgment is that it is said to have satisfied both the parties to the suit.

The Hindu Message

Dharma and Life—XIII.

Public opinion and State Policy.

There is a general idea or impression abroad that a popular scheme of education and examination and the spread of cheap newspapers among the masses are the means by which public opinion is, and can be, created among the people of a state in such a manner as to react upon the measures of the government. Nothing can be a greater mistake. Let us look at the current political phenomena of public life in Great Britain and in other countries in Europe. What we find is that rich persons belonging to this or that party start cheap newspapers with the intention of furbishing up the excellences and concealing the defects of the measures of the state when their own party is in power. When their party and its chiefs are no longer at the head of the Government, the same newspapers cry down the measures of the party and government opposite when in power and present them to the public view in the most unattractive form so as to raise a storm of obloquy and opposition in the public mind. We have already pointed out that it is the party chiefs who determine the nature of public policy and the measures which are to be set in motion in pursuance of such policy. When once these measures are settled, the creation of a public opinion favourable or adverse to them is a foregone conclusion. A public opinion is brought into existence by a mere process of manufacture according to the methods already stated. by resorting to the platform—and sometimes even the pulpit—as agencies for playing the party game in the most efficient manner possible ! Professor Bertrand Russell says truly:—"Politics and economics are more and more dominated by vast organisations, in face of which the individual is in danger of becoming powerless." The principles of party—which mean nothing but the unprincipled pursuit of *National prestige*, so called, or the exploitation of weaker or less organised communities within or abroad—govern the formation and development of these "organisations" of big parties with their swollen coffers and vast armies of camp-followers. There is no doubt much tall talk about the value of freedom in the formation of opinion, but there is precious little effort in practice to keep freedom of opinion really alive. All are borne along by the stream of current party shibboleths and the necessity of preserving party supremacy unimpaired in the determination of state policy and state measures.

Let us now turn to India—to that ancient India when the eternal principles of Dharma (and Danda-Niti or Aryan science and art of government had sway. Let us see how public opinion contrived to exhibit itself and had its full share of influence in determining the measures and policy of the king,—*i.,e.*, the state. We shall turn to the Mahabharata again and again as to a mine of extensive resources in the shape of information on the present subject. In the *first* place, the "*Council of Ministers*" has already been mentioned as one of the "seven limbs" of the government. The Mahabharata says:—"Among the Ministers there must be learned Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Brahmins all full of wisdom and well acquainted with the art and science of government. The king must first ascertain the views of Brahmins well acquainted with the *Niti-shastra* (the science of polity), then he must learn the views of Kshatriyas who are fully acquainted with (the same) Niti, and then he must know the views of Vaisyas and Sudras who know the Shastra and are interested in the welfare and prosperity of the state" (*Raja-dharma*, Chap. 68, slokas 15 and 16). We thus see that the Council of ministers was composed of the most esteemed and representative men of *all Varnas*. Such men are very different from the party leaders and party-magnates who carry on the Government of the day in Great Britain and elsewhere in Western countries. The so-called ministers today blow hot and cold according to the interests and conditions which loom big from moment to moment, and even according to the foaming gusts of passion and the ferments of disappointed, but soaring, ambition that rise to the surface of affairs purely through the persistent and unscrupulous agitation maintained by unprincipled men. How the pre-war opinions and conduct of British public men are widely different from those which emanate from them in regard to the political self-determination of India are matters of public notoriety today.

Moreover, let us quote what even a man like Mr. Lloyd-George who is at the head of the government of the British Empire has to say regarding the British officials of the Indian Civil Service who exercise authority in India:—"their every word a command, every sentence a decree." No doubt, he also adds—"accepted willingly by the people with trust in their judgment and confidence in their justice and their fairness, which ought to be the pride of their race." Then, why is it that the Congress commands so much public support and public confidence! We remember reading in Hunter's Life of the Earl of Mayo that that nobleman, when he was Viceroy in India, expressed the opinion that the district officers were often "tryannical" in their dealings with the people. No doubt, there has been much improvement since, but still there is much that is undesirable and even arbitrary in their conduct of district and local affairs, and our people have not come by their own even in such matters as primary education, village police and sanitation, abkari administration, rural agriculture, &c. The manner in which the settlement of land revenue is conducted from one period to another has become a by-word in the mouths of men. Still more irregular and unsatisfactory is the manner in which the question of granting remissions of revenue is treated by the Civil Service officials concerned from time to time. The memories of the scandals of the Tanjore Settlement and Remission agitation during the black Grant-Duff quinquennium remain with us as an ineffaceable record of evil rule. It is easy to see in what sense certain methods and principles of Indian bureaucratic rule are "accepted by the people" here, in spite of the blatant assertions so satisfactory to the narrow mind and aims of a Lloyd-George or a Curzon—not to speak of the lesser spirits who rule within their own smaller spheres and grooves of unmanly self-assertion and self-aggrandisement. How different was the case of the "ministers" and "executive" in the ancient system of Aryan rule! In the *first* place, they must all be acquainted with the Indian science and art of government and must properly advise the King and carry on his state's affairs in accordance with the principles of *Niti*. We do not at all object to Mr. Lloyd-George's statement that the "responsibility" the British have undertaken in India is a "sacred trust" and a "high destiny." But we deny that the British officials in general who constitute the Civil Service Bureaucracy have always or truly so regarded it. Mr. Lloyd George himself speaks of his determination "not to deprive it of its functions or its privileges." People who are conscious of discharging a "sacred trust" or a "high destiny" have never been known to care for the petty emoluments, gains, and pensionary doles of office, and ought to set aside their purely personal interests and disregard even transient personal disabilities in order to place the permanent interests in their charge on a permanent basis of beneficence to the people at large. Why, then, do we hear this plaintive cry from the Civil Service officials regarding the insufficiency of their '*pay, pensions, privileges*'? Let us rid our mind, then, of all cant and hypocrisy?

The Mahabharata again, throws a flood of light on the practice of the principles of popular government in Ancient India when it refers to what it calls "*Sila*," as that by which the whole world is gained over to the cause of the state and to the acceptance and approbation of its policy and methods. We translate three *slokas* of Rajadharma (Chap. 124).—"*Sila* is stated as consisting in not maliciously plotting against the interests of any and every section of the people either in action, or even by thought or word, and in conferring on them all sorts of graces, benefits and gifts. Whatever is not beneficial to others, what is only indicative of the ruler's power, prestige or brute-strength in action, and whatever the ruler will have later on to be ashamed of (on account of its injustice or injury to the people's interests) should not be done under any conditions. Only such measures must be undertaken and by such methods as will secure popular approbation and commendation in their (voluntary) assemblies or public meetings." In the very next sloka, the Mahabharata states that "even if a ruler who violates the principles of *Sila* attains to prosperity sometimes, he will not enjoy it long, but will speedily fall into ruin, root and branch." Here we see how the ancient Indian state not only encouraged the people to hold popular meetings and assemblies for expressing their opinions on public policy and the measures of the government, but never punished their leaders or representatives for agitating public interests and grievances. Professor Bertrand Russell says truly: "Institutions cannot preserve liberty unless men realise that liberty is precious and are willing to exert themselves to keep it alive." Modern states and statesmen, in their dealing with dependent and mandatory peoples introduce freedom with one hand and coercion with the other; they assert the former in the admirable language of speculative theory or principle, but deny

it in practice when the people proceed to avail themselves of the promised boon by subjecting them to confinement within the dungeon-walls of the prison and by other measures of coercion injurious to health of mind and body. In all modern states the vastness and power of the state as an organisation is the most serious and dangerous of the possible impediments to popular liberty and the popular will! How different were the conditions of the ancient Indian state under the operation of the principles of *Sila?* In our view, the *substance of popular freedom was secured* under the ancient Indian system through the promotion by the state itself of voluntary popular assemblies and even voluntary organisations for the promotion of various interests of business, religion, &c., on which the people of India then set a value. State policy and state interests did not suffer thereby, but were to secure for themselves the strength and glory derived by its endeavours to promote public beneficence and from its incessant attempt to base itself on the support of the will of the people. What a startling contrast to Modern Imperialism, its aims and methods?

Literary and Educational.

Arjuna of the Gita.

By R. KRISHNASWAMI AIYAR, M.A., B.L.

To understand the Srimad Bhagavad Gita aright, it is necessary to properly understand the context in which the teaching was given, the particular mentality of the pupil and the unique personality of the Teacher. A very common mistake that is made with reference to the Gita is to treat it as a comprehensive treatise on Vedanta and seek for all authority in it for every Vedantic conception and for every practical rule of conduct. The mistake arises from the reader forgetting the setting of the episode in the scheme of the Mahabharata. Scholars are not wanting even for enunciating the curious theory that the Gita is a later interpolation in the Mahabharata, basing their theory mainly on their own conception of the propriety of a philosophical discussion in the midst of opposing forces arrayed for battle. For our part we see no such impropriety for we realise that whatever may be the initial impetus which moves us sometimes to engage in serious activities there still arises a moment of inactivity, of thought, of hesitation, of doubt, just before we launch into the activity itself. It may be that to the unthinking man the excitement which gave rise to the activity is strong enough to lead him on unconsciously into the activity itself before he realises where he is and without giving him any time to consider its propriety or even its feasibility; but to one who is not the victim of his own passions and retains the power of discrimination even in the midst of excitement and bustle, hesitation is sure to come on, its extent being proportionate to the gravity of the situation and the competency of the actor to decide.

The situation in which Arjuna found himself was a most unenviable one when we bear in mind the extreme sensitiveness of his nature. In the situation itself there was nothing strange for it was common to him and to the other warriors assembled on the battle-field. To the calm Yudhishthira and the noble Bhishma and perhaps a few others, their grasp of what was Dharma and what not was so sure and steady that they had no doubt about the propriety of engaging in battle and their grasp was not any the less firm even when the foes that they had to kill happened to be their own kith and kin. The majority of the other combatants were actuated by passions, various in their nature but all tending to blind them to the gravity of the step that they were about to take and preventing them effectively even from a consideration of the propriety or otherwise of the step. It may have been the hatred of the opponents or the love of their own side; it may have been even only an ardent desire for the fame of having taken part in the unprecedented war; it may have been only to seek heaven by this short cut of a glorious death. We are not concerned with the particular motive but only with the fact that as regards the majority there *were* motives which made it unnecessary for them to decide the abstract question of Dharma even if they were aware of any such question awaiting their decision. Arjuna unfortunately had neither the mental stability of his eldest brother nor the passionate impulsive nature of his other colleagues. We may therefore well conceive of his position as very embarassing. Was the duty to fight paramount even to the duty not to injure? Here was a conflict of duties. Was the desire to kill his foe to be encouraged in preference to the aversion to kill his own kinsman? Here was a conflict of desires. Arjuna was thus caught between two opposing considerations and he had to decide summarily for the time at his disposal was short. He therefore proceeded to decide on the prima facie aspects of the case.

The duty not to injure is as much a duty as the duty to fight; but if I fight, I shall be killing so many innocent persons thereby leading to the destruction of the sanctity of their families; if however I do not fight, they will all be saved from death and their families safeguarded from ruin; if they are cruel they may perhaps kill me seeing that I am unarmed and averse to fight; is the possibility of my wanton death at their hands to prevent me from the sure saving of the several others from certain death? I shall therefore be selfless and cease to care for my personal welfare in the noble object of saving the lives of others. I therefore decide in favour of the duty not to injure. Fighting is not worthy of such os I who realise the havoe that a battle causes.

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥
कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥

"If these do not see the bad effects that will ensure from the destruction of families and the sin in treachery towards friends, overpowered as their minds are with greed, ought we not to know that we must turn back from this sin when we are wide awake to the bad effects that will ensue from the destruction of families."

यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥

"It will be better for me if the sons of Dhritarashtra armed as they are with weapons will kill me who am unarmed and unresisting."

Again the desire to get rid of a foe is as legitimate as the desire to live with a kinsman; the very object of killing a foe is to secure uninterrupted enjoyment of the pleasures of the world in the midst of one's own friends and kinsmen; if therefore the foe that has to be killed happens to be a friend or a kinsman, the enjoyment that is secured by killing him is sure to be ever alloyed with the painful feeling that the enjoyment was obtained at the loss of a friend or kinsman; is such an enjoyment worth the trouble of obtaining? I shall not therefore deal death to my kinsmen, even though they may be my foes, simply to secure this doubtful enjoyment.

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ॥

स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ।

येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।

त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥

आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ।

मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः स्यालाः संबन्धिनस्तथा ॥

एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।

अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥

"What pleasure can we have after killing the sons of Dhritarashtra? How can we be happy after killing our own kinsmen? The very persons on whose behalf we desire for kingdom, pleasures and happiness are now standing before us ready for battle disregarding their lives and their wealth—teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and others related (by marriage). Even if they strike at me, I do not desire at all to strike at them even if I could thereby secure the mastery of the three worlds; Would I do it for this earth?"

Such were the reasonings of Arjuna before he threw down his Gandiva. But the most pitiable part of it was that he was not sure that his reasonings were right for hs dimly felt that he was not reasoning out the matter from the standpoint of abstract Right and Wrong but that he was swayed by the love for his kinsmen even while professing to consider a problem of Dharma. This accounts for the apparent inconsistency in Arjuna exclaining first decidedly that he will *not* fight and then appealing to Sri Krishna to tell him what he ought to do and then actually fighting.

It will be interesting to consider how Arjuna, the stern warrior, gradually evolved himself into Arjuna, the non-fighter. This is shown in a few characteristic touches of Vyasa. Arjuna when he blew his conch and when afterwards he asked his divine charioteer to drive his chariot to the centre of the battle field was as determined as ever on fighting and he would have laughed at the idea of walking quietly away from the battle field. He only wanted to know who were his opponents to see for himself which of them he could give combat to on equal terms and which he could relegate to his inferiors.

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ।

यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।

कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन्रणसमुद्यमे ॥

"O Achyuta, please station my chariot at the centre between the two armies till I see these (warriors) standing before me desirous of fighting and know with whom I have to fight in this battle."

If he feels any pity for his foes, it is not because of their impending death but only because they are fighting on the wrong side. His pity therefore, if any, is confined to the opposite side.

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।

धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेः युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥

'I shall see these who are going to fight and are assembled here with a view to please the wicked-minded son of Dhritarashtra."

The seed for the change in the mentality of Arjuna may be said to have been thrown by Sri Krishna himself, The Lord found from the words and the attitude of Arjuna that the desire to win and wrest the kingdom from his foes was predominant in his mind; and out of his infinite grace the Lord wanted to clear Arjuna's mind of this impurity of selfishness and to make him fight selflessly from a pure sense of duty. To do this, the selfishness has got to be first diluted; from concerning itself solely with his personal welfare it has to include in it the kindred first before it can be led to spread itself over the whole of mankind and then the whole of creation at which stage the selfishness becomes synomymous with selflessness. Sri Krishna therefore when he has taken the chariot to the centre does not refer to the "foes" or the "combatants" there assembled but wants Arjuna to see the "*Kurus*"

उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान्समवेतान्कुरूनिति ।

This seed, little as it is, is sufficient for the sensitive Arjuna. He being himself as much a Kuru as his opponents is naturally led by this subtle suggestion to forget the hostile character of the warriors assembled on the other side and to recollect solely their kinship with himself. The result was that when Arjuna surveyed the warrior host he forgot the cruel wrongs that he had suffered at the hands of Duryodhana and his party and saw before him only his kinsmen.

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितॄनथ पितामहान् ।

आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातॄन्पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ॥

श्वशुरान्सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ।

तान्समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्बन्धूनवस्थितान् ॥

कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

"Arjuna saw there standing before him his fathers, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, friends, fathers-in-law and well-wishers in both the armies. Seeing them all relations before him, Arjuna was moved by deep pity and sorrowfully said this."

Perceiving therefore as he did only the kinsman-aspect of the warriors before him, he was naturally reluctant to kill them for in killing them he would be killing only his own men. So long as he thought them his enemies, he could have fought them unconcernedly and even with zest. If he had looked upon them with indifferent eyes confining himself to his own duties, he could equally have fought them without any scruple. But the moment that he felt that they were related to him as his "own" it was impossible for him to fight them. Well might his heart stagger from the impending destruction of his "own" kinsmen.

दृष्ट्वेमान्स्वजनान्कृष्ण युयुत्सून्समुपस्थितान् ॥
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥
गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ।
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥

"O Krishna, on seeing these my own men ready for battle, my limbs give way, my mouth dries up, my body trembles and the hairs stand on end. The Gandiva slips from my hand; my skin burns; I am unable to stand and my mind seems to be in a whirl"

It is not cowardice. It is not a mere sense of humane aversion to cause injury. It is a desire to save the men whom he has come to look upon as his "own". It is a selfish desire no doubt but the selfishness transcends his own person and extends to his kinsmen disregarding the narrower personal feeling. He is shocked at finding himself about to engage in a conflict solely for his personal ends at the imminent risk to his own kinsmen.

अहो बत महत्पाप कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।
यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हंन्तु स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥

"O, what a great sin are we about to commit in that we are prepared to kill our own men moved thereto by greed for the pleasures of kingdom."

He is ashamed at his own selfishness which had brought about such a situation. He would try even how to avert the disaster, even if in doing so he has to sacrifice his personal ends.

If Arjuna had stopped at the expression of this intense feeling of his that he could not kill his own kinsmen, perhaps Sri Krishna would have found it difficult to influence Arjuna to fight in violation of that feeling, for to a man who is swayed solely by his feelings all arguments and persuations are generally useless. But Arjuna was not such a person with whom the feelings were the prime motive power. Arjuna trained as he had been in the path of Dharma would not hesitate to fight even against the dictates of his heart if the rule of Dharma required it. Arjuna himself was conscious of his own attitude but was very reluctant to believe that the call of Dharma could land him in a situation where he had perforce to subordinate and violate his feelings. That is why he tries his best to persuade himself that the battle he was about to engage in was sinful and that he was true to Dharma only if he desisted therefrom. Sri Krishna was easily able to point out the fallacious nature of his reasonings about the Dharma aspect of the war and to show to him that his aversion to fight was not really due to his Dharmic conscience but solely because of his attachment to his kindred. That Arjuna is trying to confuse the two issues together and to arrive at a conclusion which will be consistent both with Dharma and his personal attachments may be seen from passages like

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान्हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥
अहा बत महतापपं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।
यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥

"What *pleasure* can we have after killing the sons of Dhritarashtra, If we kill these attacking persons, only *sin* will attach itself to us......O, what a great *sin* are we about to commit in that we are prepared to kill *our own* men moved thereto by greed for the pleasures of kingdom."

These slokas give us ground for presuming that Arjuna would not have minded much or thought it a sin to kill the combatants if he could derive *pleasure* from it or at least if they were not *his own* relations. In either of those cases there would have been no conflict between Dharma and his personal feelings and he would not have hesitated to follow the former. This unconscious attempt at confusing what we are doing with what is right is universal and Arjuna was not free from it. He was more outspoken when he merely said

स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ।

"O Madhava, how can we be *happy* after killing *our own* men."

His high tone of renunciation when he said that he did not care for the pleasures of this world or of the next has yet a false note in it. It is very well to say,

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।
किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥
एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥

"I desire not victory nor kingdom nor pleasures. What use have we for kingdom, pleasures or even our lives......I do not like to strike at these even if they strike at me and I would not do it even for the mastery of the three worlds; would I do it for this earth?"

But why? Is this renunciation due to a perception of the impermanency and illusory nature of all enjoyments? Certainly not; for Arjuna does not at all object to the enjoyments themselves but only to secure them by the killing of his cousins. His attachment to his consins, teachers etc., is for the moment more potent than his attachment to the pleasures of the world or of the worlds to come. He would very much like to have the latter if he could manage to have them without striking a single blow at his relations. His renunciation therefore is not absolute but only an expression of the relative predominance between two objects of attachment.

येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।
त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम-
स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥

"The very persons on whose behalf we desire for kingdom, pleasures and happiness are now standing before us ready for battle disregarding their lives and their wealth......The sons of Dhritarashtra are fronting us—the very persons killing whom we would not desire to live thereafter."

It is therefore a mistake to suppose that Arjuna by his renunciation of the pleasures of this life and the life hereafter has satisfied the condition of इहामुत्रार्थफलभोगविराग "non-desire of the enjoyment of the fruits here and hereafter" to qualify him to receive the highest teaching of the nature of the Self. On the other hand, it will be seen from the above quotations that Arjuna did want the pleasures but wanted them *unalloyed*. Arjuna knew his own uncertain mind far better than some of his admirers. He felt that his own nature prompted him to fight but felt at the same time his heart reluctant to do

so. He was in a fix. He did not know what to do He made up his mind not to fight and threw down his weapons.

विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ।

न योत्स्ये इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥

All the same, he was not sure that his dicision was the right one to arrive at for he appeals to Sri Krishna in the same breath for His directions. He feels a depression and a heaviness of heart and feels himself incompetent to finally decide what is best for him.

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः

पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः ।

यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥

"As my nature is now overpowered with the fault of mental depression, my mind is unable to decide what the Dharma is and I therefore ask you to tell me what definitely is for my welfare. I am your pupil. Please instruct me who has taken refuge in you."

I have heard some scholars attempt to import into this stanza the conception of self-surrender to a Guru with a view to obtain the knowledge of the Self. But it is quite clear from the context that Arjuna was far below that stage, that he had no idea of surrendering himself at all to Sri Krishna and that his doubts had nothing to do with an abstract Brahma but only with a practical question of Dharma; the very fact of his mental depression disqualifies him for the reception of the highest knowledge.

That Sri Krishna rightly gauged the qualifications of his pupil at their true level is clearly seen from the method of argument which He adopts. If the Lord had believed that Arjuna had the spirit of genuine absolute non-desire, He would never have brought forward the persuasive arguments which he actually uses, sometimes promising rewards, sometimes threatening punishments, of a worldly kind.

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।

तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥

"If you fall, you attain heaven; if you win, you enjoy the earth. Therefore get up, O son of Kunti, determined for battle."

Sri Krishna well knew that the desire of Arjuna for virtuous fame as a warrior would triumph over his feelings of compassion or love and he utilises that fact to goad him into action. He therefore tells him,

भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।

येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून्वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।

निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखकरं नु किम् ॥

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।

संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥

"If you desist from battle, those great warriors who have till now thought well of you will think lightly of you and that you do so out of fear; and those who are not well disposed towards you will say all sorts of things about your prowess. What is more painful than this? This bad fame will not fade away with the lapse of time. To one who has been respected, bad fame is worse than death."

The Lord never lost sight of the true mentality of his pupil even when the latter sought to soar far above his capabilities in the region of philosophical thought. Even when favoring him with a vision of the Viswarupa He thought it expedient to show him also a vision of all his enemies moving to their death and to assure his astonished devotee that he would triumph over his foes, earn undying fame and enjoy the kingdom.

युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान् ॥

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व

जित्वा शत्रून्भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ॥

"Fight and you will be victorious over your enemies in the battle. Get up therefore, win fame, conquer your enemies and enjoy the prosperous kingdom."

To Arjuna's objection however to have the triumph, fame and kingdom "stained with blood" (रुधिरप्रदिग्धान्—II, 5), the Lord assures him that he is prepared to take upon himself the blame of killing them and that Arjuna may fight with a free conscience knowing that he cannot save his cousins and others even if he would as the Lord has already determined on their destruction.

ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे

येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥

मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव

निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ।

द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च

कर्णं तथाऽन्यानपि योधवीरान् ।

मया हतास्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठाः

"All the warriors assembled in the opposing forces will cease to be, even without you. All these have already been killed by me. O Arjuna, be simply the occasion. Kill Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna and other heroic warriors who have already been killed by me. Do not trouble your mind about this."

This assurance takes away the point of Arjuna's objection and he therefore consents to fight as directed by the Lord.

Sri Krishna was quite aware that when Arjuna made preparations for the war and entered the battlefield that he was as much actuated by desire for kingdom and fame as by a sense of Dharma. The main object of Sri Krishna's teaching was to eradicate the former element from his mind and make him confine himself to the latter so that by the practice of desireless action he might qualify himself for the reception of true knowledge. In dealing therefore with the conflict of duties the divine Lord refers to the Shastra alone as the decisive authority on the point, other considerations, sentimental or otherwise, being irrelevant and incapable of outweighing the weight of the Shastraic injunction and a consideration of the relative entertainability of two conflicting desires being entirely foreign to a problem of Dharma

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥

"Therefore the Shastra alone is your guide in deciding what to do and what not; know therefore what is enjoined by the Shastras and do here such actions."

Knowiug as he does that all desires whether they be good or bad equally enchain the aspirant and prevent him from progressing in the true path of Dharma, Sri Krishna emphasises on the duty to perform the activities prescribed by the Shastras and insists upon the eradication of desire even in the performance of that duty.

This was the main teaching of the Gita in so far as Arjuna was concerned but as he seemed to think himself competent to renounce the duty of fighting Sri Krishna had to tell him that the path of renunciation was not for such as he but was reserved for persons who had already faithfully and successfully trodden the path of selfless duty and had qualified their pure minds for the reception of the absolute Truth. This naturally led the curious Arjuna to ask his obliging teacher to tell him somewhat of such persons and of their goal. In obliging him, the divine teacher had necessarily to say somewhat of persons who were no longer aspirants but had actually reached their goal. Arjuna fascinated with that high ideal stage was curious to know its nature and the qualifications that lead up to it, with a view to know whether he could aspire to it himself. Sri Krishna satisfied his curiosity and told him the magnificent glory of that stage while at the same time he was careful to point out to his pupil that he was not then qualified at all to aspire to that stage and that he had to undergo much preliminary training in selfless activity before he could be the recipient of Jnana itself. The teaching therefore of the higher Jnana is purely incidental in the Gita and it is therefore not proper to deduce from the greater and more frequent insistence on selfless activity that Sri Krishna has enunciated a "philosophy of Action" in preference or opposition to a "philosophy of knowledge," for it will be seen from the Gita itself that action is not an end in itself but only a preparatory stage for the attaining of knowledge. Sri Krishna had to insist upon selfless activity for he had to wean his pupil from desire and affection to duty and selflessness. Arjuna was not then qualified to receive any higher teaching except as a piece of information which he could avail himself of at some future time.

The above reading of the mind of Arjuna may not seem very complimentary to him but it cannot be denied that it is the mind of the typical man who honestly desires to lead a blameless and virtuous but happy life. It is really such earnest people alone that secure and retain the friendship of the Divine Lord. Neither the very wise nor the very ignorant require the help of Iswara, the former *being* self-sufficient and the latter *thinking* himself so. The above reading is also consistent with the exact place assigned to Arjuna by one of the Dhyana Slokas of the Gita.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावः दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

"All the Upanishads were the cows; the milkman was Sri Krishna; the milk was the great nectar called the Gita; Arjuna was the calf; and the wise man was the drinker"

சுதந்திரன்.

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